

CLAIMS

Sub B3 Q2  
1. ~~A marketing system~~ for selectively modifying an existing telephone network by modifying a portion of the call processing software of the existing telephone network and by replacing at least a portion of an audible call progress signal generated by the telephone network by a prerecorded announcement, the system comprising:

10 means for placing a telephone call by a calling party at a first telephone;

means for connecting the telephone call to an identified called party at a second telephone having a particular calling status;

15 means for determining the busy/idle status of the second telephone; and

means for playing at least one announcement to the calling party for a predetermined period of time during a time period when an audible call progress signal would have been produced.

20 ~~2. A system according to claim 1, wherein said audible call progress signal is a ring signal.~~  
ringback

a  
a Sub B4  
~~3. A system according to claim 2, wherein said announcement is preceded by a single audible ring signal.~~  
ringback

25 ~~4. A system according to claim 1, wherein said audible call progress signal is a busy signal.~~

Sub B5  
~~5. A system according to claim 4, wherein said announcement is preceded by a single audible busy signal.~~

30 Sub B3 Q3  
~~6. A system according to claim 1, wherein said calling party can participate in the selection of the type of announcement to be played.~~

~~7. A system according to claim 1, wherein said telephone network includes a video terminal at said location of the first telephone.~~  
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8. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said playing means can play a sequence of announcements,  
wherein said system repeatedly generates additional  
announcements at predetermined intervals until said  
5 identified called party answers said second telephone or  
said calling party disconnects said first telephone and  
abandons the telephone call.

9. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said determining means checks the busy/idle status of the  
10 second telephone at predetermined intervals.

10. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said identified called party is immediately connected to  
said calling party when said identified called party  
answers said second telephone.

11. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said announcements are digitally stored within said  
playing means.

12. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said telephone network is an interexchange network.

13. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said telephone network is a local exchange network.

14. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said telephone network is a long distance network.

15. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
said calling party can interact with said generated  
announcement.

16. A system according to claim 1, wherein  
the prerecorded announcement can be changed, upgraded or  
deleted from a remote location.